

***Governing Iowa's public
universities and special schools***

University of Iowa
Iowa State University
University of Northern Iowa
Iowa School for the Deaf
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School
Lakeside Lab Regents Resource Center
Quad-Cities Graduate Center
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Gary W. Steinke, *Executive Director*

June 19, 2007

Legislative Oversight Committee
State Capitol
Des Moines IA 50319

Re: Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School and Licensure

Dear Members of the Legislative Oversight Committee:

Several years ago, members of the Legislative Oversight Committee were informed that the student population served at the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS) might qualify for Medicaid funding. IBSSS is not a licensed facility for such funding.

"The purpose of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School is to provide an educational program to any resident of the state up to 21 years of age who has a visual disability too severe to acquire a satisfactory education in a regular educational environment." Existing admission procedures require that students who enter IBSSS must have specific educational goals, as identified by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The purpose of the IEP is to support the academic success of each student. IEP team members include parents of the student, special education teacher, classroom teacher, support workers, and outside agencies involved with the student.

On-campus, IBSSS works with students whose IEP indicates that they can benefit from intensive programs provided by the School. Off-campus, IBSSS uses its resources to provide high quality instruction to address the visual disability of students with multiple disabilities who are placed in licensed facilities, such as Child Serve and Glenwood, and to students with a visual disability who remain in their home school districts. IBSSS is not a licensed facility to provide long-term health care to children. The value of becoming a licensed facility was investigated in a comprehensive study undertaken jointly by the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education in the recent past. The study revealed a negative cost benefit for IBSSS to obtain such a license at this time.

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IBSSS, together with the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education, is committed to continuing to work with students who are blind or visually impaired, in the least restrictive environment described by the student's IEP with the objective of helping students attain their educational goals. Working collaboratively with a variety of state agencies, IBSSS uses its resources to address statewide needs and solutions for students who are blind or visually impaired.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Steinke

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cc: Mary Shipman, LSA
Legislative Liaisons
Legislative Log